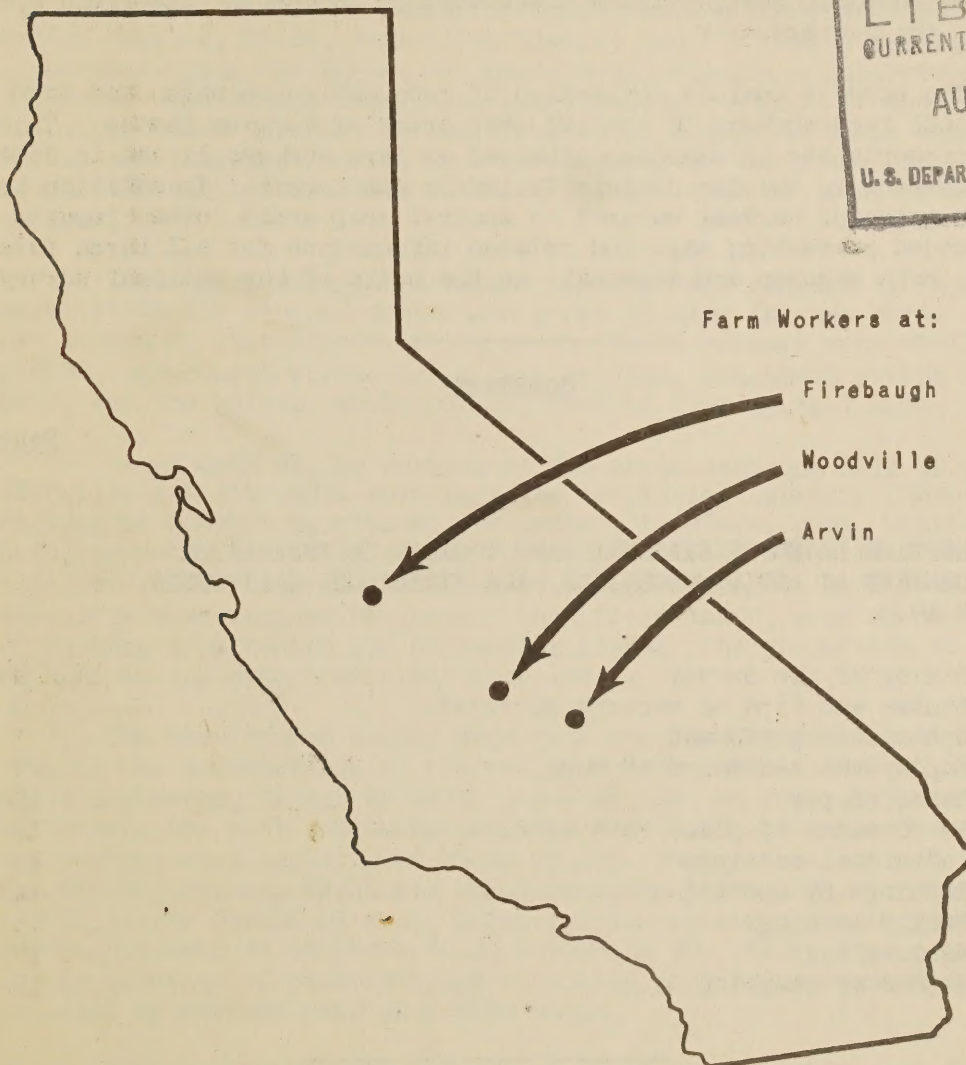
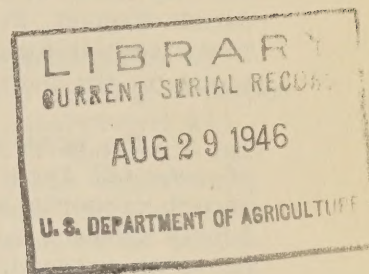


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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau of Agricultural Economics

WAGES AND WAGE RATES OF SEASONAL FARM WORKERS IN
USDA LABOR SUPPLY CENTERS AT ARVIN, WOODVILLE,
AND FIREBAUGH, CALIFORNIA, NOVEMBER 1945



Surveys of Wages and Wage rates in Agriculture, Report Number 13

Washington, D. C.
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PREFATORY NOTE

This is the thirteenth of a series of reports being issued by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, presenting results secured from new enumerative sample surveys of farm wages and farm wage rates. The surveys were planned and conducted under the general direction of Conrad Taeuber, Office of the Chief, by a Bureau-wide Committee with Louis J. Ducoff as Chairman. Members of the Wage Project Committee are as follows: Glen T. Barton, Emerson M. Brooks, Charles F. Cannell, Charles A. Gibbons, Margaret Jarman Hagood, Roger F. Hale, Earl E. Houseman, Barbara B. Reagan. The State Agricultural Statisticians cooperated in conducting the field operations on the surveys.

The surveys include collection of information on wages and wage rates of seasonal farm workers in special crop areas of various States. This report presents the information obtained on farm workers living in USDA Labor Supply Centers in the San Joaquin Valley in California. In addition to reports on wages of harvest workers in special crop areas, other reports are being issued presenting wage and related information for all hired farm workers, both regular and seasonal, on the basis of the national surveys.

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Prepared by William H. Metzler. Special acknowledgements are made to George Scott, State Agricultural Statistician, and members of his staff for supervising the field work and to the Office of Labor and managers of the Labor Supply Centers for their cooperation in carrying through the survey.

SUMMARY

Labor requirements in the lower San Joaquin Valley are at their peak during the late fall and early winter months. Cotton picking starts in October while the late varieties of grapes are still being harvested. The orange, olive, and walnut harvests compete with cotton in November and December for available labor.

Part of the labor supply is housed in the government camps at Arvin, Shafter, Wasco, Woodville, Linnell and Firebaugh. During November enumerators from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics interviewed 233 workers at the Arvin, Woodville, and Firebaugh camps. At the Arvin and Woodville camps information was obtained in regard to their employment, wages, and earnings for the week of November 3rd to 10th. At the Firebaugh camp similar data were obtained for the week of November 25 to December 1.

Employment during the weeks concerned was reduced by light showers which virtually stopped cotton and grape picking for two days. Such rains are common at that season of the year. Three workers were wholly unemployed, one-fourth worked for 4 days or less, one-third worked for five days, and the balance worked a full week of from $5\frac{1}{2}$ to 7 days.

One-fourth of the workers at the Arvin camp and half of those at Woodville and Firebaugh were employed in picking cotton. Others were engaged in harvest operations for grapes, tomatoes, peas, olives, walnuts, carrots, and other crops. One-third of the workers at the Arvin camp were either engaged in non-harvest operations or in harvest activities of a more responsible nature than field labor, such as overseeing or working in a cotton gin or packing plant. The proportion of such workers at the other camps was much lower.

The most common hourly wage rate received by workers at the Arvin camp in the southern end of the valley was 70 cents. At Woodville, 65 miles northward, it was 85 cents per hour, and at Firebaugh, 145 miles northwest, the most common hourly wage was \$1.00. However two-thirds of the workers were employed at piece rates. The government ceiling rate for picking cotton, \$2.25 per hundredweight, prevailed over the entire area. In the Firebaugh area, however, pickers averaged 40 pounds of cotton per hour as compared to 33 pounds in the other camps. Hence hourly earnings of piece workers at cotton picking approximated those received by workers paid on a time basis.

Average weekly earnings were highest at the Arvin camp in spite of the lower hourly wage rates. Employment had been more regular, particularly in non-harvest operations. Workers there averaged \$37.20 for the week, compared with \$35.90 at Firebaugh and \$27.90 at Woodville. Average earnings of cotton pickers showed a somewhat different pattern. They were \$30.15 at Firebaugh, \$24.50 at Arvin, and \$22.50 at Woodville.

There were half as many women workers as men. Their working time during the week was approximately 18 percent less than that of the men

and their earnings 37 percent less. One-sixth of the workers were under 18 years of age. These younger workers averaged almost 30 percent less working time than the adults, and their average weekly earnings were only 45 percent as much.

One family had as many as 7 wage earners, but half of the families at Woodville and 35 percent of those at Arvin had only one working member. The average number working per family was 1.7 at Arvin and 1.5 at Woodville. Average earnings per family group at Arvin were \$65.10 for the week and at Woodville \$51.10. Similar data were not obtained at Firebaugh. Families with one working member at Arvin earned an average of \$48.30 and at Woodville, \$36.60. A second working member increased the family income by approximately 50 percent.

WAGES AND WAGE RATES OF SEASONAL FARM WORKERS IN
USDA LABOR SUPPLY CENTERS AT ARVIN, WOODVILLE,
AND FIREBAUGH, CALIFORNIA, NOVEMBER 1945.

The six USDA labor supply centers in the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley were originally constructed to house seasonal farm laborers. However, housing became so scarce during the war that many farm workers had to live in these camps as more or less permanent places of residence. This was in spite of the fact that the metal shelters had no electricity or running water and had numerous other inconveniences. ^{1/} Changes in the population of three of these camps were as follows:

<u>Camp</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>1942</u>	<u>1943</u>	<u>1944</u>	<u>1945</u>
Arvin	Nov. 3-10	401	521	802	722
Woodville	Nov. 3-10	359	611	883	1,134
Firebaugh	Nov. 25-Dec. 1	402	713	1,051	1,360

Farm workers were drained away from the camps during the early part of the war. More recently, however, they have had a higher rate of occupancy than at any previous period in their history. When movement out of and into the camps slowed down, some of the farm workers sought year-round farm employment rather than harvest labor. Where this change has occurred, a larger proportion of the seasonal field labor in the area is now being done by local Mexican and Mexican National workers generally than was the case before.

Timing of the survey.—There are two periods of high labor requirements in the southern San Joaquin area. The first comes in the late spring with the harvest of oranges, potatoes, and plums. The second period starts

^{1/} Approximately three-fourths of the housing units at these camps are metal shelters. The balance are labor homes and apartments which are better equipped and more comfortable. Turnover of occupants of the latter types of housing is very low.

in the fall with the harvest of grapes and lasts through the picking of cotton, oranges, and olives during the winter. During the first of these periods, data for Report Number 6 of this series, "Wages and Wage Rates of Seasonal Farm Workers in USDA Labor Supply Centers at Arvin, Linnell, and Shafter, California, June 1945," were obtained. The present survey was planned to obtain data during the second peak period. It covers the picking of cotton, grapes, and olives, but was taken too soon to include data on the orange harvest in Tulare County.

The cotton harvest was close to its peak in the vicinity of all three camps at the time of the surveys (table 1). The raisin grape harvest in Kern and Tulare Counties had already closed, but a small amount of picking of table and wine grapes was still being done.

Table 1.--Estimated number of seasonal workers employed in Kern, Tulare, and Fresno Counties, California, during November 1945 ^{1/}

	Estimated number of seasonal workers week ending:				
	Nov. 3	Nov. 10	Nov. 17	Nov. 24	Dec. 1
<u>Kern</u>					
All workers	9,530	10,000	10,750	11,050	10,870
Cotton	6,850	7,000	7,800	7,200	7,800
Grapes	800	1,150	1,150	1,350	950
Truck crops	1,880	1,850	1,800	2,150	1,750
<u>Tulare</u>					
All workers	12,775	10,470	12,200	15,780	12,690
Cotton	5,100	5,750	6,000	7,400	7,450
Grapes	5,050	2,700	2,000	950	-
Olives	1,925	1,550	1,700	800	-
Oranges	-	-	2,050	6,300	4,750
Other	700	470	450	330	490
<u>Fresno</u>					
All workers	13,600	11,700	8,835	8,160	8,960
Cotton	5,000	5,000	6,000	6,500	7,500
Grapes	6,450	5,050	1,460	400	200
Figs	1,100	650	600	550	350
Other	1,050	1,000	775	710	910

^{1/} Data from California Weekly Farm Labor Reports issued by the Agricultural Extension Service, Farm Labor Project.

Number and type of workers surveyed.—The total population at the camps varies daily, as families move in and out. Families of more than 4 persons are assigned to two cabins. Single persons are expected to "double up" and frequently 3 or 4 may occupy the same cabin.

There were 145 family groups and 25 single persons in the Arvin camp at the time of the survey. The total camp population was 722 persons. Hence there was an average of almost 4.9 persons per family group.

Reports were obtained from 48 of the family groups, a sample of approximately one-third of the families. These families contained 103 workers, or an average of slightly under 1.7 wage earners per family.

As a survey had been made at the Arvin camp in the preceding June, several comparisons may be drawn in regard to the camp population and number of workers. The earlier survey found 808 persons in the camp, of whom 27 were Mexican Nationals. There were 169 families in the camp then, an average of 4.6 members per family. At that time, however, there were 2.6 working members per family, compared to the 1.7 in November. Probably school attendance was the major factor in this change.

The Woodville camp was occupied by 238 family groups and 12 single persons at the time of the November survey. The total camp population was 1134 persons, an average of 4.7 persons per family group. Reports were obtained from 57 family groups, providing a sample of approximately 25 percent. The average number of workers per family group was slightly under 1.5.

The Firebaugh camp was experiencing a boom period. The total population was 1,360 persons. Of these, 185 were single and the rest members of 276 family groups, an average of 4.3 members per family. The survey at the Firebaugh camp was conducted on a different basis at this camp than at the other two. In family interviews, only the head of the family was questioned at this camp in regard to his earnings. Hence total family data are lacking. A total of fifty persons were interviewed, including 6 local workers of Mexican extraction, 5 Filipinos, and 4 Negroes.

At the Arvin and Woodville camps there were about half as many women workers as men workers (table 2). The proportion of workers under 18 years of age was relatively high at Woodville, where they constituted 24 percent of all workers. It was only 9 percent at Arvin.

Table 2.--Age and sex of workers surveyed in USDA labor supply centers at Arvin, Woodville, and Firebaugh, California, November 1945.

Age and sex	Arvin		Woodville		Firebaugh 1/	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All workers	83	-	102	-	48	-
Males - total	53	100	72	100	46	100
Under 18	4	7	13	17	0	0
18 - 44	31	57	46	64	34	74
45 and over	18	36	14	19	12	26
Females - total	30	100	30	100	2/	2/
Under 18	3	10	11	37	2/	2/
18 - 44	24	70	17	57	2/	2/
45 and over	3	20	2	6	2/	2/

1/ Wage data obtained only for heads of sample families at Firebaugh and so are not directly comparable with those for the other two camps.

2/ Only 2 female workers in sample at Firebaugh reported on age.

Some of the workers at the Woodville camp who were employed at cotton and grape picking were quite young. Eight of the 12 workers under 14 years of age worked only on Saturday, while four worked all week. Child labor at the Arvin camp, on the other hand, was quite unusual. There were only two workers in the sample under 14 years of age and they worked only one-half day each.

Older workers were most common at Arvin. The workers who engaged principally in cotton picking, as at Woodville and Firebaugh, usually were somewhat younger.

These age and sex differences among the workers affect the type of work done, amount of employment, output per day, and average earnings. Both the women and the older workers put in a somewhat shorter day than the younger adults and earn less per hour.

Operations performed.--Although cotton picking was the major operation in progress at the time of the survey, only 17 percent of the males and 40 percent of the females at the Arvin camp were so engaged. The proportion of cotton pickers at the other camps was much higher. At Woodville, 43 percent of the males and 63 percent of the females were picking cotton. At Firebaugh, 48 percent of the males and two of the three female heads of families were so employed.

Other workers at the Arvin camp were engaged in picking grapes, tomatoes, and peas, but an unusually large number were employed in general farm work or other operations of a non-seasonal nature. The number amounted to 18 of the 53 males, or almost 34 percent. Among the workers employed in harvest operations, 14 men and 2 women did more responsible work than field labor, such as weighing cotton, trucking, loading, or overseeing. They constituted a significant proportion of the workers.

Eight of the workers were employed in packing plants, mainly in packing grapes but some were labeling and repairing boxes and icing grapes (table 3).

The general rule at the other camps was for the workers to be engaged in common harvest operations. At Woodville in addition to picking cotton, the workers were picking grapes and olives. Eight of the 72 males at Woodville were engaged in non-seasonal work, and only 4 of those employed in harvest operations had work of a more responsible nature than field labor.

At Firebaugh the major operation aside from picking cotton was tying and packing carrots. Five workers were engaged in such non-harvest operations as leveling land, driving tractors, or repairing farm machinery. Ten workers had harvest tasks of a fairly responsible nature, such as cotton ginner, crane operator in a processing plant, making ice in a refrigeration plant, and field boss in cotton or carrot operations.

Table 3.—Operations performed during survey week by workers in USDA Farm Labor Supply Centers at Arvin, Woodville, and Firebaugh, California, November 1945.

Operation, sex of worker	All workers	Arvin	Woodville	Firebaugh
Total workers	237			
Male	174	53	72	49
Female	63	30	30	3
Picking cotton	95			
Male	62	9	31	22
Female	33	12	19	2
Picking grapes	26			
Male	14	4	10	-
Female	12	6	6	-
Picking peas or tomatoes	16			
Male	10	10	-	-
Female	6	6	-	-
Picking olives	14			
Male	12	-	12	-
Female	2	-	2	-
Tying carrots	6			
Male	6	-	-	6
Other farm work	53			
Male	46	20	17	9
Female	7	4	3	-
Processing	18			
Male	16	6	1	9
Female	2	2	-	-
Nonagricultural	6			
Male	6	4	1	1
No employment	3			
Male	2	-	-	2
Female	1	-	-	1

Employment and hours of work.--Light showers which delay the cotton, grape and other harvests for a few days are normal in the lower San Joaquin area in November. It is also common for early morning fogs to shorten the workday for picking cotton and grapes. These conditions were experienced in the 1945 season.

Rain and fog interfered with employment at all camps to some extent during the survey week. On November 6 and 7, .05 and .11 inch of rain fell in the Arvin area and .05 and .26 at Woodville. At Firebaugh .35 of an inch of rain fell on Sunday November 25, the day prior to the survey period, and there was .18 inch on the 29th. 2/

These amounts of rainfall are light compared to the precipitation that occurs in December and January. Hence the sample weeks represent the early fall months rather than the entire winter season. There was more irregularity of employment at two of the camps than can be explained by the weather. At Woodville, 7 of the male and 8 of the female workers were employed 2 days or less during the survey week. Eight of these were children of school age who worked only on Saturday, and two were people over 45 years of age. Forty-eight percent of the men and 43 percent of the women worked four days or less. Only 11 percent worked a full six days (table 4).

Table 4.- Number and proportion of workers at USDA Farm Labor Supply Centers at Arvin, Woodville, and Firebaugh, California, who worked a specified number of days and hours during the survey week, November 1945.

Time worked	Arvin		Woodville		Firebaugh	
during week	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent

Males						
Days						
All	49	100	71	100	46	100
2 or less	3	6	7	10	4	9
2-1/2	1	2	1	2	-	-
3	1	2	6	9	3	7
3-1/2	2	4	1	1	-	-
4	2	4	19	27	8	17
4-1/2	-	-	1	1	-	-
5	19	39	25	35	14	30
5-1/2	2	4	3	4	-	-
6	15	31	8	11	13	28
6-1/2	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	4	8	-	-	4	9

- continued -

2/ Weather data from U. S. Dept. of Commerce Weather Bureau, "Climatological Data, California Section," November 1945.

Table 4.--Number and proportion of workers at USDA Farm Labor Supply Centers at Arvin, Woodville, and Firebaugh, California, who worked a specified number of days and hours during the survey week, November 1945. - continued -

Time worked during week	Arvin		Woodville		Firebaugh 1/	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<u>Males</u>						
<u>Hours</u>						
Total	53	100	72	100	46	100
Under 25.0	5	10	15	21	9	19
25.0 - 34.9	9	17	16	22	10	22
35.0 - 44.9	9	17	31	43	11	24
45.0 - 54.9	17	32	7	10	9	20
55.0 - 64.9	7	13	3	4	3	6
65.0 and over	6	11	-	-	4	9
<u>Females</u>						
<u>Days</u>						
Total	30	100	30	100	2/	-
2 or less	2	7	8	27	-	-
2-1/2	1	3	1	3	-	-
3	4	14	-	-	-	-
3-1/2	1	3	-	-	-	-
4	5	17	4	14	-	-
4-1/2	1	3	1	3	-	-
5	10	33	12	40	-	-
5-1/2	1	3	1	3	-	-
6	4	14	3	10	-	-
6-1/2	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	1	3	-	-	-	-
<u>Hours</u>						
Total	30	100	30	100	2/	-
Under 25	6	20	9	30	-	-
25.0 - 34.9	7	23	3	10	-	-
35.0 - 44.9	3	10	16	53	-	-
45.0 - 54.9	13	44	2	7	-	-
55.0 - 64.9	1	3	-	-	-	-
65 and over	-	-	-	-	-	-

1/ Wage data obtained only for heads of sample families at Firebaugh so are not directly comparable with those for the other two camps.

2/ Only 3 female workers in sample at Firebaugh.

A check over the days and hours worked at different operations indicates that employment was slack in all except nonagricultural work. At Woodville grape pickers averaged working only 3.8 days during the week, cotton pickers 4.0 days and olive pickers 4.8. These differences could reasonably be expected to result from the two showery days. Other elements in the situation are suggested by the fact that male cotton pickers averaged 4.2 days and the female, 3.5, while pickers under 18 averaged only 2.8 days.

Workers at Woodville averaged working 7.8 hours per day. For cotton pickers, however, the average was only 7.3 hours and for workers under 18 the average was 7.1 hour. The average work-week for workers at Woodville was slightly under 33 hours and for cotton pickers it was only 28 hours.

Employment was also somewhat irregular at the Firebaugh camp. One-third of the persons questioned worked four days or less during the week. At Arvin, employment was much more regular than at Firebaugh, in spite of the two days when work was halted by light showers. Farm workers put in an average of 4.7 days. Cotton pickers worked 4.0 days, the least of all groups, and pea pickers were next lowest with 4.1. The average work day for farm workers was 9.0 hours and the average work week was 43 hours.

Women in these three camps worked somewhat less regularly than the men. They averaged .7 of an hour less per day and .7 of a day less per week. This difference was partially due to the type of work they performed, but they usually averaged less time than men in the same types of work. Workers under 18 worked still less. They averaged .6 of an hour less per day than adult workers and 1.3 days less per week. The fewer days per week partially results from the fact that 8 of the 31 workers under 18 years old were school children who worked only on Saturday.

Table 5.--Average time worked during survey week by workers in the USDA Farm Labor Supply Centers at Arvin, Woodville, and Firebaugh, California, November 1945

Sex and age	Hours per day			Days per week		
	Arvin	Woodville	Firebaugh 1/	Arvin	Woodville	Firebaugh 1/
All workers	8.9	7.8	7.9	4.8	4.2	4.8
Males	9.1	8.0	8.0	5.1	4.3	4.8
Females	8.3	7.5	6.9	4.4	3.9	4.0
Under 18	2/	7.3	-	2/	3.2	-
18 - 44	9.0	7.9	8.1	4.9	4.5	4.9
45 and over	8.6	8.1	2/	4.9	4.3	2/

1/ Wage data obtained only for heads of sample families at Firebaugh so are not directly comparable with those for the other two camps.

2/ No averages shown for fewer than 10 workers.

Hours of employment of cotton and pea pickers at Arvin were comparatively short. The former worked an average of 32 hours during the week and the latter 28 hours.

Very few of the workers were employed on more than one farm during the week (table 6). All but one worker at Woodville, and all but 3 at Firebaugh continued on the same farm during the week. Ten workers at Arvin, or 13 percent, worked on two farms. One worker was employed on three farms.

Table 6.--Number of different farms worked on during survey week by workers in USDA Farm Labor Supply Centers at Arvin, Woodville, and Firebaugh, California, November 1945.

Farms worked on during week	Arvin		Woodville		Firebaugh	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	of workers		of workers		of workers	
Total	79	100	101	100	39	100
One	68	86	100	99	36	92
Two	10	13	1	1	2	5
Three	1	1	0	0	1	3

Rates of pay.--One-third of the workers surveyed were paid on an hourly basis and the rest at piece rates. The proportion paid at hourly rates varied greatly at different camps. At Arvin, 39 of the 83 workers (47 percent) were paid by the hour. At Firebaugh the proportion was 37 percent and at Woodville it was less than 16 percent. These differences are associated to a large extent with the types of work done. Simple hand tasks, such as picking cotton or peas, are paid for on a piece rate basis, whereas tasks which call for a greater amount of care, skill, or responsibility, are paid for by the hour.

In the 142 airline miles between Arvin and Firebaugh, is found the greatest change in hourly wage rates in the State. Although Kern County is in the Central Valley, it is on the edge of the Los Angeles labor market in which wages are low compared to the northern part of the State. Wages at Firebaugh, on the other hand, are influenced to a greater extent by wage levels in the San Francisco and Stockton areas. The most usual hourly wage received at Arvin was 70 cents, although 75 cents was also common (table 7). At Woodville, 65 miles north, the most common rate was 85 cents. At Firebaugh it was \$1.00. At Arvin, workers engaged in leveling land were paid \$1.10 an hour, while at Firebaugh the rate for that operation was \$1.60.

By contrast, the wage for performing the one-piece rate operation which was common to the area was everywhere the same, \$2.25 per hundred-weight for picking cotton (table 8). This was the rate established by the War Food Administration in 1943 for picking cotton and was continued through the next two seasons. Eighty-five of the 95 persons picking cotton were

paid that rate; nine of the other ten were paid \$2.50 per hundredweight and one person was paid \$2.35. The persons paid above \$2.25 were all living in the Woodville camp.

Wage rates paid at processing plants varied greatly depending on the type of work done, but were at the same general level as farm wages.

Table 7.--Number and percentage of workers paid specified hourly rates during survey week, by type of work USDA Farm Labor Supply Centers at Arvin, Woodville, and Firebaugh, California, November 1945

Amount of hourly rate	: All workers :		: Grape picking :	: Loading and hauling :	: Other farm work :	: Process- ing :	: Non-agri- cultural :
	Number	Percent					
	Number	Percent	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
<u>Arvin</u>							
Total	39	100	12	0	13	13	1
70 cents	15	39	7	-	2	5	1
75	9	23	2	-	3	4	-
80	2	5	-	-	1	1	-
83	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
85	3	8	1	-	-	2	-
90	4	10	1	-	3	-	-
92-1/2	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
100	4	10	1	-	3	-	-
over 100	2	5	-	-	1	1	-
<u>Woodville</u>							
Total	16	100	6		8	1	1
70 cents	0	-	-		-	-	-
75	3	19	-		2	-	1
80	3	19	2		1	-	-
83	0	-	-		-	-	-
85	7	44	3		4	-	-
90	1	6	1		-	-	-
92-1/2	0	-	-		-	-	-
100	2	12	-		1	1	-
over 100	0	-	-		-	-	-
<u>Farm work</u>							
<u>Firebaugh</u>							
Total	18	100	9			9	1
70 cents	1	5	1			-	-
75	1	6	1			-	-
80	-	-	-			-	-
83	2	11	-			2	-
85	4	22	1			2	1
90	1	6	-			1	-
92-1/2	1	6	1			1	-
100	6	33	3			3	-
over 100	2	11	2			-	-

Table 8.--Piece rates reported by workers in USDA Farm Labor Supply Centers at Arvin, Woodville, and Firebaugh, California, during survey week, November 1945

Operation	: Number workers : : reporting :	Rate	: : Unit
Cotton picking	85	\$2.25	Hundred lbs.
" "	1	2.35	" "
" "	9	2.50	" "
Tomato picking	4	.12	Bucket
" "	5	.15	"
Pea picking	7	.03	Pound
Olive picking	8	1.00	Box
" "	3	1.25	"
" "	3	1.50	"
Carrot packing	6	.22	Crate
Walnut picking	6	2.00	Sack
Grape picking	1	.12	Box
" "	6	.14	"
" "	2	.15	"
Apple picking	3	.15	Box

Performance of piece rate workers.--The only operation in which enough workers were engaged to provide a reliable guide to performance was in picking cotton. The 95 workers engaged in this operation picked slightly over 100,000 pounds of cotton during the survey week, an average of 260 pounds a day or 36 pounds an hour (table 9). The pickers at Woodville and Arvin, in the eastern part of Central Valley, averaged 33 pounds an hour. Those at Firebaugh, in the western part, averaged 40 pounds. Yields on the west side of the Central Valley are generally somewhat higher than on the east side and pickers are able to obtain a higher output.

This difference in output between the three camps is affected to some extent by the fact that all the cotton pickers at Firebaugh were adults, while 15 of the 50 pickers at Woodville were under 18 years of age. The adult pickers at Woodville picked an average of 36 pounds an hour and the younger ones 23.5 pounds. Only 3 of the 21 pickers at Arvin were under 18 years of age and these did not materially reduce the average.

The difference in output in picking cotton as between Arvin and Firebaugh tends to bring about a difference in earnings from piece rates, comparable to that which exists in the hourly rates. Cotton pickers at Arvin

had average earnings of 75 cents an hour, whereas those at Firebaugh earned 91 cents.

The 14 workers engaged in picking olives gathered .9 boxes an hour or 7.3 boxes in a 8.1-hour day.

Table 9.--Performance and earnings per hour and per day of workers employed at piece rates at USDA Farm Labor Supply Centers at Arvin, Woodville, and Firebaugh, California, during survey week, November 1945

Operation and unit	Number workers surveyed	Units handled		Average earnings	
		Per hour	Per day	Per hour	Per day
Cotton picking, cwt.	95	0.36	2.6	\$.80	\$6.00
Olive picking, box	14	.9	7.3	1.08	8.50

Individual earnings.--Largely because of more regular employment, total earnings of workers at the Arvin camp were higher for the week than in the other two camps (table 10). They were \$37.20 as compared with \$35.90 at Firebaugh and \$27.90 at Woodville. Male workers at Arvin averaged \$42.80 compared with \$36.70 at Firebaugh and \$31.40 at Woodville.

Daily earnings follow the same pattern but to a lesser degree. Average hourly earnings were highest at Firebaugh, 94 cents, next highest at Arvin 88 cents, and lowest at Woodville, 85 cents.

Another factor in the low average incomes at Woodville was the high proportion of workers under 18 years of age and their low average earnings. The 23 workers under 18 earned an average of \$10.30 for the week, \$3.80 a day, and 52 cents an hour.

Some individual cases of high and low earnings are illustrative of conditions which give rise to such extremes. Highest individual earnings were made by some of the workers at the Arvin camp. An overseer in tomato picking operations was paid \$10.00 a day and 1-1/2 cents a load. He earned \$125 during the week. Another worker gathered corn for 80-1/2 hours during the week for \$1.00 an hour. A labor contractor in the same camp earned 25 cents a hundred pounds for supplying and supervising cotton pickers. His commissions amounted to \$80.00. At Firebaugh a cotton ginner worked for 84 hours during the week for \$1.00 an hour, and two land levelers, who were paid \$1.60 an hour, earned \$75.20 and \$72.90. Highest earnings at Woodville were of an olive picker who picked 48 boxes of olives during the week at \$1.50 a box for total earnings of \$72.00. He earned an average of \$2.25 an hour and \$18.00 a day.

The lowest earnings were made by some of the child workers at the Woodville camp. A boy 8 years old picked cotton for 8 hours in one day and earned \$1.00; his sister, 10 years old, earned \$1.50 in the same length of time. A boy 11 years old and his two sisters, aged 8 and 10, together earned \$6.26 picking cotton for one day of 8 hours. Five workers in another family spent 7 hours a day for 5 days picking grapes. Their total earnings were \$63.00, an average of \$10.50 each for the week, or 30 cents an hour apiece. The members of this group were a woman 51 years old, 4 daughters aged 20, 16, 14, and 12, and a son 9 years old.

Average weekly earnings of women workers at these camps were 37 percent less than those of the men. This results from three factors, less work during the week, difference in type of work done, and lower performance on some types of piece work. As already indicated, the earnings of workers under 18 years of age were considerably lower than those of adult workers. They were 55 percent lower than those of adult workers 18 to 44 years old. The younger workers engaged in the less well paid operations, as well as working fewer hours per week than the adults.

Table 10.--Average cash wages earned by workers in the USDA Farm Labor Supply Centers at Arvin, Woodville, and Firebaugh, California, November 1945.

Sex and age	:Hourly cash wages:			:Daily cash wages:			:Weekly cash wages:		
	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
	:Arvin:	:Wood-:	:baugh:	:Arvin:	:Wood-:	:baugh:	:Arvin:	:Wood-:	:baugh:
	:ville:	1/	:	:ville:	1/	:	:ville:	1/	:
	Dols.	Dols.	Dols.	Dols.	Dols.	Dols.	Dols.	Dols.	Dols.
All workers	.88	.85	.94	7.80	6.70	7.40	37.20	27.90	35.90
Males	.94	.92	.94	8.60	7.30	7.60	42.80	31.40	36.70
Females	.73	.67	.76	6.10	5.00	4.40	26.90	19.50	17.40
Under 18 yrs.	2/	.52	-	2/	3.80	-	2/	10.30	-
18 - 44 yrs.	1.00	.91	.98	8.20	7.20	8.00	40.70	32.40	38.60
45 yrs. & over	.78	.95	2/	6.70	7.70	2/	33.30	32.90	2/

1/ Wage data obtained only for heads of sample families at Firebaugh so are not directly comparable with those for the other two camps.

2/ No averages shown for fewer than 10 workers.

At Woodville, 20 percent of the men and 50 percent of the women earned less than \$20 during the survey week. At Arvin 10 percent of the men and 30 percent of the women earned less than that amount. Forty-two percent of the men at Arvin earned between \$40 and \$60, compared with 23 percent of those at Woodville.

Earnings by operation.--Average earnings of cotton pickers at the three camps were \$24.90 per week, \$6.00 a day, and 80 cents an hour. Cotton pickers at Firebaugh, however, earned \$30.20 for the week, \$6.30 a day and 91 cents an hour. As previously indicated, this difference was

attributable largely to better picking conditions on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley. The fact that only heads of families were interviewed at Firebaugh also raised the average of wages reported there.

Table 11.--Amounts earned during survey week by workers in USDA Labor Supply Centers at Arvin, Woodville and Firebaugh, California, by sex, June 1945.

Sex and earnings	:Number and proportion of workers earning specified amounts					
	: Arvin		: Woodville		: Firebaugh 1/	
	: Number	: Percent	: Number	: Percent	: Number	: Percent
<u>Weekly</u>						
Males reporting	55	100	72	100	46	100
Under \$20	6	11	14	20	7	15
\$20 - 29	8	15	12	17	10	22
30 - 39	9	16	26	36	13	28
40 - 49	11	20	14	19	8	17
50 - 59	12	22	3	4	4	9
60-over	9	16	3	4	4	9
Females reporting	30	100	30	100	2	100
Under \$20	9	30	15	50	2	100
\$20 - 29	30	30	5	17	-	-
30 - 39	6	20	10	33	-	-
40 - 49	4	13	-	-	-	-
50 - 59	2	7	-	-	-	-
60-over	-	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Daily</u>						
Males reporting	51	100	71	100	46	100
Under \$5.00	5	10	13	18	6	13
\$5 - 5.99	3	6	6	8	4	9
6 - 6.99	12	23	11	16	10	21
7 - 7.99	4	8	16	23	8	17
8 - 8.99	7	13	8	11	11	24
9 - 9.99	4	8	5	7	4	9
10 - 10.99	7	14	5	7	-	-
11 - 11.99	6	12	1	2	-	-
12 -	3	6	6	8	3	7
Females reporting	30	100	30	100	2	100
Under \$5.00	9	30	16	54	2	100
\$5 - 5.99	5	17	3	10	-	-
6 - 6.99	9	30	3	10	-	-
7 - 7.99	3	10	4	13	-	-
8 - 8.99	1	3	1	3	-	-
9 - 9.99	1	3	2	7	-	-
10 - 10.99	-	-	1	3	-	-
11 - 11.99	1	3	-	-	-	-
12-	1	4	-	-	-	-

1/ Wage data obtained only for heads of sample families at Firebaugh so are not directly comparable with those for the other two camps.

At Arvin the cotton pickers earned an average of \$24.50 for the week, \$6.10 a day, and 75 cents an hour. At Woodville weekly and daily earnings were reduced to a greater extent by weather conditions. The pickers averaged \$22.50 for the week, \$5.70 a day, and 78 cents an hour. Men earned significantly more at this operation than women, and adults more than children.

Pea pickers at Arvin had the highest hourly and daily earnings of any type of harvest worker, but their weekly earnings were reduced by irregularity of employment. Their earnings averaged \$1.34 an hour and \$8.00 a day, but their weekly income was only \$32.50. Olive pickers at Woodville were least hampered by the weather and had a weekly average income of \$40.60.

Workers engaged in processing had more regular employment than field workers. This resulted in weekly earnings of \$48.70 at Firebaugh. At Arvin, however, one day was lost and weekly earnings were only \$35.00.

Family earnings.—Total family earnings were obtained only at the Arvin and Woodville camps. Seventeen of the 48 families at Arvin (35 percent) had only one working member. They had average incomes for the week of \$48.30. At Woodville 29 families (51 percent) had one working member. Their average incomes were \$36.60. Families with two working members had family incomes approximately 50 percent higher than one-worker families—\$72.20 at Arvin and \$53.80 at Woodville (table 12).

Families with more than two working members were not numerous at Arvin. There were two families with three workers and one with four. At Woodville 8 families each had 3 working members. Their incomes were approximately double those of families with one worker. Two families at Woodville had four working members and an average family income of \$95.62. One family had 7 workers. Total income of this family was \$123.00, of which \$60.00 was earned by the head of the family.

Table 12.—Average earnings per family by number of workers in the family at USDA Farm Labor Supply Centers at Arvin and Woodville, California, during survey week, November 1945 ^{1/}

Number workers in family	Arvin		Woodville	
	No. families	Average weekly	No. families	Average weekly
	of this type	earnings	of this type	earnings
Total or average	48	\$ 65.10	57	\$ 51.10
1	17	48.30	29	36.60
2	28	72.20	17	53.80
3	2	^{2/} 65.90	8	71.60
4 and over	1	147.50	^{3/} 3	104.80

^{1/} Family data not obtained at Firebaugh.

^{2/} Members of one family partially unemployed.

^{3/} Includes one family with seven working members.

Forty percent of the families at Woodville and 21 percent at Arvin had average earnings for the week of less than \$40 (table 12). Approximately 30 percent of the workers at both camps had incomes ranging between \$40 and \$60. Half of the families at Arvin and 30 percent of those at Woodville had incomes of more than \$60.

Table 13.--Amounts earned by families during survey week, by number of workers in family, USDA Labor Supply Centers at Arvin and Woodville, California, November 1945 ^{1/}

Weekly earnings	: All families :		: Number of workers in family				
	: Number :	: Percent :	1	: 2	: 3	: 4 and over	
<u>Arvin</u>							
Families reporting	48	100	17	28	2	1	
Under \$20	2	4	2	-	-	-	
\$ 20 - 39	8	17	6	2	-	-	
40 - 59	14	29	5	8	1	-	
60 - 79	8	17	2	6	-	-	
80 - 99	8	17	1	6	1	-	
100 - 119	6	12	-	6	-	-	
120 - 139	1	2	1	-	-	1	
140 - 159	1	2	-	-	-	-	
<u>Woodville</u>							
Families reporting	57	100	29	17	8	3	
Under \$20	3	5	3	-	-	-	
\$ 20 - 39	20	35	15	4	1	1	
40 - 59	17	30	9	5	2	-	
60 - 79	11	19	2	7	2	-	
80 - 99	2	3.5	-	-	-	-	
100 - 119	2	3.5	-	1	1	1	
120 - 139	1	2	-	-	2	1	
140 - 159	1	2	-	-	-	-	

^{1/} Family data not obtained at Firebaugh.

Perquisites.--Some workers at these camps no longer have cars to take them to and from work. Others like to conserve the means of transportation they have. Eighteen of the workers at Arvin and 13 at Firebaugh were furnished transportation. This situation seemed in no way related to the type of work done. Some of the workers picked cotton, others worked in gins, bunched carrots, or did general ranch work.

Method of sampling.--The enumerators obtained a list of names of the family heads in each camp and a diagram showing which cabins they occupied. Every third family was marked for interview at the Arvin camp.

A smaller fraction was taken in the other two--one family in four at Woodville, and one in five at Firebaugh. Residents of the farm labor homes, the apartments, the metal shelters, and the platform tents were proportionately represented in the sample in order to secure proper representation of the more permanent and the seasonal workers at each camp. At Arvin and Woodville all workers in each of the selected families were interviewed in regard to employment and earnings during the week. At Firebaugh data were obtained only for the head of the household.

